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Transmitted herewith for filing is the Patent Application of:

Inventors:

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For:

DECISION MAKING IN CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS

Enclosed are:

- X 3 Sheets of Formal Drawings.
- X An assignment of the invention to International Business Machines Corporation, Armonk, New York 10504.

\_\_\_\_ A certified copy of a \_\_\_\_\_ application, dated \_\_\_\_\_, no.

X Executed Declaration and Power of Attorney is attached to the application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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### **DECISION MAKING IN CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS**

#### Field of the Invention

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The invention relates to decision making in classification problems and relates particularly, though not exclusively, to improved methods of classification in decision fusion applications.

## **Background of the Invention**

Decision fusion is a widely used technique for several kinds of classification applications such as, for example, medical imaging, biometric verification, signature or fingerprint recognition, robot vision, speech recognition, image retrieval, expert systems etc.

Generally, in decision fusion applications, multiple classifiers (or experts) perform separate classification experiments on respective data sets, and consequently designate a nominated class as correct. The classifier decisions are then combined in a predetermined selection strategy to arrive at the final class, as described below. Two extreme approaches for the combination strategy are outlined below:

- 1. The first approach may accept the decision of the majority of the classifiers as the final decision (decision consensus approach).
- 2. The second approach can take the decision of the most competent expert as the final decision (most competent expert approach).

An intermediate approach involves determining a solution in which a consensus decision is evaluated in terms of the past track records of the experts. Instead of directly accepting the consensus decision, the reliability of each decision is evaluated through various kinds of confidence measures. The decision is either accepted or rejected based on the result of such an evaluation.

In a further approach, a Bayesian cost function is minimised over all the decisions given by the experts. The cost function is defined as the cost of making a wrong decision

multiplied by the joint probability of occurrence of the respective decisions.

None of the above approaches outlined above are rigourously optimal or universally applicable, and can be subject to errors or limitations of one kind or another. Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to at least attempt to address these and other limitations associated with the prior art. In particular, it is an object of the invention to generally improve the classification accuracy of particular decision fusion applications which rely on one of the prior art approaches outlined above.

## **Summary of the Invention**

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The inventive concept is founded in recognition that the reliability of a classifier in a decision fusion architecture can vary from sample to sample and from experiment to experiment. The inventive concept involves using the decisions from multiple classifiers in a decision fusion application to make an informed decision as to the classifier which is likely to be correct.

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More particularly, the inventive concept resides in a recognition that a strategy of assigning confidences to different classifiers in a decision fusion architecture can be used to improve the classification accuracy of a decision fusion application. This inventive strategy is thought to result in improved classification accuracy.

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Embodiments of the invention involve attempting to optimally adapt the weight given to a particular classifier from sample to sample, which generally results in improved performance compared with prior art approaches. A weight or metric of relative confidence is assigned to every classifier, depending upon its sample confidence and overall confidence (as subsequently described). For each class, an overall score (or likelihood) is calculated which combines individual scores from all classifiers, which allows the class with the highest score (or likelihood) to be designated as the correct class.

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The invention provides a method suitable for deciding how to classify a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, the method comprising:

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- (a) associating a weight  $w_{ij}$  with each of a plurality of classifiers i which are class models for how to classify a sample j in one of a number of predetermined classes k;
- (b) calculating for each of said predetermined classes k a weighted summation  $CL_{jk}$  across said classifiers i of the likelihood  $l_{ijk}$  that the sample belongs to that respective class k, weighted by the weight  $w_{ij}$ ; and
- (c) designating the sample j as belonging to the class k which has an associated weighted summation of likelihoods CL<sub>jk</sub> which is greatest in value.

The invention further provides an apparatus for classifying a data sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, the apparatus comprising: input means to receive data; and processor means for calculating associating a weight  $w_{ij}$  with each of a plurality of classifiers i which are class models for how to classify a sample j in one of a number of predetermined classes k, and for designating calculating for each of said predetermined classes k a weighted summation  $CL_{jk}$  across said classifiers i of the likelihood  $l_{ijk}$  that the sample belongs to that respective class k, weighted by the weight  $w_{ij}$ . The weight can be derived from a metric of relative confidence in the decision of a respective classifier i. Preferably, this is an L-statistic (linear combination of the order statistic), which represents the statistical separation among the order statistic, preferably log-likelihoods, against the class models for a classifier.

This determination of relative confidence can be performed in two different ways to calculate two components of weight given to the decision of a classifier i, referred to as sample confidence  $L_{ij}$  and overall confidence  $H_{i}$ . Preferably, these confidence values of the classifiers i are subsequently used to combine the decisions from the classifiers i to obtain the final decision.

The L-statistic, for a particular sample j,  $L_{\scriptscriptstyle Ijk}$  , can be defined as:

$$L_{ij} = \ a_1 \ l_{ij1} + a_2 \ l_{ij2} + ... + a_n \ l_{ijn}$$

where  $l_{ijk}$  denotes for sample j and classifier i, the log-likelihood of the kth most likely class is such that the  $l_{ijk}$ s form order statistic, that is  $l_{ij1} > l_{ij2} > ... > l_{ijm}$ . The values of  $a_i$ s define the

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form of the particular L-statistic L<sub>11</sub> chosen. Preferably, the order statistic used is simply the difference between the log-likelihoods of the two most likely classes k. That is,  $a_1 = 1$ ,  $a_2 =$ -1 and all other  $a_i s = 0$ .

A cumulative mean H<sub>1</sub> of the sample confidence L<sub>11</sub> over a large number of samples is used to measure the overall discrimination capability of the classifier. It is currently

 $H_i = \sum\nolimits_{j=1}^t L_{ij}/t$ 

overall confidence  $H_{\iota}$  so calculated converges to a constant value which

understood that the value of the

is well separated for different overall confidence levels.

Overall confidence for classifier i, H<sub>1</sub>, is computed as cumulative mean or moving average of the L-statistic L<sub>11</sub> over a number of samples j after which it becomes almost constant.

In the equation directly above t is the number of samples after which the overall confidence value stabilises. H1 attempts to model some kind of disturbance or noise which is application specific. Typically, such noise degrades the efficiency of the classifier across all classes. For example, in the case of speech recognition, this may be ambient noise (such as car noise, cocktail party noise) present in the audio channel. There may be, of course, some cases in which the amount of noise present in the classifier varies during the experiment.

For every incoming sample i, sample confidence values L<sub>11</sub>s are computed for every classifier i. The overall confidence  $H_{\mbox{\tiny $I$}}$  for the classifiers are updated using  $L_{\mbox{\tiny $I$}}$ . Preferably, a weight  $w_{ij}$  is assigned to each classifier i as a function of the overall confidence  $H_{i}$  and the sample confidence  $L_{ij}$ . Once weights  $w_{ij}$  for each classifier are known, each incoming sample j can be classified in a class k by calculating the combined log-likelihood  $\text{CL}_{jk}$  for each class k, as set out directly below.

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where

$$W_{11} = f(L_{11}, H_{1})$$

For the sample j, the class k with the highest calculated combined log-likelihood  $CL_{jk}$  is finally chosen as the correct class k for sample j. The  $l_{ijk}$  denotes the log likelihood of sample j for class k using classifier i.

The invention also includes a computer program product for performing embodiments of the inventive methods described above.

Embodiments of the invention can be used in various applications in which decision fusion is conventionally used.

## **Brief Description of the Drawings**

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of the process involved in reaching a decision in a classification problem, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic representation of the process involved in determining a weight using a threshold value, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 3 is a schematic representation of computing hardware suitable for performing embodiments of the invention.

# 20 Detailed Description of Embodiments and Best Mode

An embodiment of the invention is described below in the context of an audiovisual speech recognition application which uses decision  $CL_{jk} = \sum\nolimits_{i=1}^c W_{ij} * l_{ijk} \qquad \text{fusion for classification problems.} \quad \text{In this context,}$  there are two relevant classifiers: audio and video.

In overview, the classification or recognition process initially involves steps as outlined in Fig. 1. Initially, in step 10, the process involves associating a metric of relative

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confidence with respective classifiers or class models which predict how a sample should be recognised. The  $L_{ij}$  is calculated in step 20 as an L-statistic of the log-likelihoods  $l_{ijk}$ , as detailed below. The moving average  $H_{ij}$ , across a suitable number of samples j is then determined in step 30. This allows weights  $W_{ij}$  to be calculated in step 40 for each classifier from  $H_{ij}$  and  $L_{ij}$ , according to a suitable function as detailed below. The combined likelihoods across classifiers  $CL_{jk}$  are then calculated in step 50 as a weighted summation of the likelihoods of each class, so that the most likely class can then be determined in step 60.

For the speech recognition application decision, the problem can be defined as follows. Given an audio and a video vector corresponding to a particular speech time frame, it is necessary to determine the phone class to which this frame belongs. Phones are modelled as GMM (Gaussian Mixture Models) obtained from the training data.

Given an audio vector, its likelihood of corresponding to each of the phone classes is computed from the respective classification models. From these likelihoods, the L-statistic is preferably chosen simply as the difference between the first and the second most likely choices. As a result, coefficients a are used as follows.

$$a_1 = 1$$
,  $a_2 = -1$ , all other  $a_1 s = 0$ 

A similar computation is also performed for the video vector. The L-statistic is shown as  $L_{ij}$  in Fig. 2. The cumulative mean of L-statistic,  $H_i$  is used here to model the background noise present in the audio channel only, as background noise uniformly degrades the audio recognition rate across all phonetic sounds. Accordingly, the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$  decreases uniformly in the presence of noise. The combined likelihood of corresponding to a particular phone class is computed as follows.

$$CL_1 = W_a * l_{a_1} + W_v * l_{v_1}$$

Here  $l_{ai}$  and  $l_{vi}$  are log likelihoods for ith audio class and ith video class respectively,  $w_a$  and  $w_v$  are the weights assigned to the audio and video likelihoods respectively. The phone class with the highest combined likelihood is selected as the correct phone class.

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The weight for audio is determined and, since there are only two classifiers in this case, the weight for video is simply determined as the complement of the weight for audio, as the linear summation of all weights is 1. A threshold at is defined for sample confidence values of audio which are just the L-statistic in this case. First, the class confidence value for audio is checked against its threshold in step 100. If it passes this test, audio weight is computed in step 110 as a constant term and a term which is dependent on the overall confidence of the audio channel. If audio fails this test in step 120, the constant term in the weight changes.

Hence this embodiment, function f() is implemented as

$$W_{11} = f(L_{11}, H_1) = f_1(L_{12}) + f_2(H_1)$$

where  $f_1()$  is chosen as a threshold function and  $f_2()$  is given as

$$f_2(H_1) = x_1/(1 + \exp(x_2 * H_1))$$

Parameters  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  are scalar values that are selected and, if necessary, adjusted to provide good performance. Preferably, sample confidence is used as a confidence measure for a classifier for the current sample being processed. The sample confidence models non-uniform discrimination capability of the classifier across various classes due to the non-uniform dispersion of the clusters in vector space for the data set of the classifier. The sample confidence does not represent the overall discrimination capability of the classifier. A low value of the sample confidence indicates low confidence in its decision for the present sample. Similarly, a high value of the sample confidence indicates a higher confidence in its decision for that sample. The sample confidence for the present sample is preferably represented by the L-statistic for the sample.

Preferably, overall confidence represents the overall discrimination capability of the classifier across all classes (or clusters). This overall discrimination capability may vary between experiments degraded due to the presence of noise which uniformly degrades the classifier's discrimination capability across all classes. For example, in the case of speech

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recognition, this may be background noise present in the audio channel.

In this application, it is possible to achieve improvements in phonetic classification results using the techniques of the described embodiment of the invention.

Computer hardware for performing embodiments of the invention is now described.

The described process of classification can be implemented using a computer program product in conjunction with a computer system 200 as shown in Fig. 3. In particular, the process can be implemented as software, or computer readable program code, executing on the computer system 200.

The computer system 200 includes a computer 250, a video display 210, and input devices 230, 232. In addition, the computer system 200 can have any of a number of other output devices including line printers, laser printers, plotters, and other reproduction devices connected to the computer 250. The computer system 200 can be connected to one or more other computers via a communication input/output (I/O) interface 264 using an appropriate communication channel 240 such as a modem communications path, an electronic network, or the like. The network may include a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), an Intranet, and/or the Internet 220.

The computer 250 includes the control module 266, a memory 270 that may include random access memory (RAM) and read-only memory (ROM), input/output (I/O) interfaces 264, 272, a video interface 260, and one or more storage devices generally represented by the storage device 262. The control module 266 is implemented using a central processing unit (CPU) that executes or runs a computer readable program code that performs a particular function or related set of functions.

The video interface 260 is connected to the video display 210 and provides video signals from the computer 250 for display on the video display 210. User input to operate the computer 250 can be provided by one or more of the input devices 230, 232 via the I/O interface 272. For example, a user of the computer 250 can use a keyboard as I/O interface 230 and/or a pointing device such as a mouse as I/O interface 232. The keyboard and the

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mouse provide input to the computer 250. The storage device 262 can consist of one or more of the following: a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a magneto-optical disk drive, CD-ROM, magnetic tape or any other of a number of non-volatile storage devices well known to those skilled in the art. Each of the elements in the computer system 250 is typically connected to other devices via a bus 280 that in turn can consist of data, address, and control buses.

The method steps for are effected by instructions in the software that are carried out by the computer system 200. Again, the software may be implemented as one or more modules for implementing the method steps.

In particular, the software may be stored in a computer readable medium, including the storage device 262 or that is downloaded from a remote location via the interface 264 and communications channel 240 from the Internet 220 or another network location or site. The computer system 200 includes the computer readable medium having such software or program code recorded such that instructions of the software or the program code can be carried out. The use of the computer system 200 preferably effects advantageous apparatuses for constructing a runtime symbol table for a computer program in accordance with the embodiments of the invention.

The computer system 200 is provided for illustrative purposes and other configurations can be employed without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. The foregoing is merely an example of the types of computers or computer systems with which the embodiments of the invention may be practised. Typically, the processes of the embodiments are resident as software or a computer readable program code recorded on a hard disk drive as the computer readable medium, and read and controlled using the control module 266. Intermediate storage of the program code and any data including entities, tickets, and the like may be accomplished using the memory 270, possibly in concert with the storage device 262.

In some instances, the program may be supplied to the user encoded on a CD-ROM or a floppy disk (both generally depicted by the storage device 262), or alternatively could be

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read by the user from the network via a modem device connected to the computer 250. Still further, the computer system 200 can load the software from other computer readable media. This may include magnetic tape, a ROM or integrated circuit, a magneto-optical disk, a radio or infra-red transmission channel between the computer and another device, a computer readable card such as a PCMCIA card, and the Internet 220 and Intranets including email transmissions and information recorded on Internet sites and the like. The foregoing are merely examples of relevant computer readable media. Other computer readable media may be practised without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

Further to the above, the described methods can be realised in a centralised fashion in one computer system 200, or in a distributed fashion where different elements are spread across several interconnected computer systems.

Computer program means or computer program in the present context mean any expression, in any language, code or notation, of a set of instructions intended to cause a system having an information processing capability to perform a particular function either directly or after either or both of the following: a) conversion to another language, code or notation or b) reproduction in a different material form.

In the foregoing manner, a method, an apparatus, and a computer program product for are disclosed. While only a small number of embodiments are described, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of this disclosure that numerous changes and/or modifications can be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

It is understood that the invention is not limited to the embodiment described, but that various alterations and modifications, as would be apparent to one skilled in the art, are included within the scope of the invention.

## We claim:

- 1. A method suitable for deciding how to classify a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, the method comprising:
  - (a) associating a weight  $w_{ij}$  with each of a plurality of classifiers i which are class models for how to classify a sample j in one of a number of predetermined classes k;
  - (b) calculating for each of said predetermined classes k a weighted summation  $CL_{jk}$  across said classifiers i of the likelihood  $l_{ijk}$  that the sample belongs to that respective class k, weighted by the weight  $w_{ij}$ ; and
  - (c) designating the sample j as belonging to the class k which has an associated weighted summation of likelihoods  $CL_{jk}$  which is greatest in value.
- 2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the weight w<sub>ij</sub> is derived from a metric of relative confidence L<sub>ij</sub>, metric of relative which is calculated as an L-statistic, or linear combination of an order statistic, which represents the statistical separation among an order statistic of the classes k for a particular classifier i.
- 3. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the L-statistic L<sub>ij</sub> is of the log-likelihoods of respective classes k for classifiers i.
  - 4. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$ , for a particular sample j, is calculated as:  $L_{ij}=a_1\ l_{ij1}+a_2\ l_{ij2}+...+a_n\ l_{ijn}$ , where  $l_{ijk}$ s form order statistic, that is  $l_{ij1}>l_{ij2}>...>l_{ijn}$  and  $a_1=1,\ a_2=-1$  and all other  $a_is=0$ .
  - 5. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the weight w<sub>1</sub> derived from the metric of relative confidence is calculated as a function of (a) sample confidence L<sub>1</sub>, equal to

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the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$  and (b) overall confidence  $H_i$ , the cumulative mean of the sample confidence  $L_{ij}$  over a plurality of samples j.

- The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the overall confidence H<sub>i</sub> is
   successively updated with the sample confidence L<sub>ij</sub> of each sample j.
  - 7. A computer program product having a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein for deciding how to classify a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, said computer program product comprising:
  - (a) code means for associating a weight w<sub>ij</sub> with each of a plurality of classifiers i which are class models for how to classify a sample j in one of a number of predetermined classes k;
  - (b) code means for calculating for each of said predetermined classes k a weighted summation  $CL_{jk}$  across said classifiers i of the likelihood  $l_{ijk}$  that the sample belongs to that respective class k, weighted by the weight  $w_{ij}$ ; and
    - (c) code means designating the sample j as belonging to the class k which has an associated weighted summation of likelihoods  $CL_{jk}$  which is greatest in value.
- 20 8. An apparatus for classifying a data sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, the apparatus comprising: input means to receive data; and processor means for calculating associating a weight w<sub>ij</sub> with each of a plurality of classifiers i which are class models for how to classify a sample j in one of a number of predetermined classes k, and for designating calculating for each of said predetermined classes k a weighted summation CL<sub>jk</sub> across said classifiers i of the likelihood l<sub>ijk</sub> that the sample belongs to that respective class k, weighted by the weight w<sub>ij</sub>

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from a metric of relative confidence L<sub>ik</sub> metric of relative which is calculated as an L-static, or linear combination of an order statistic, which represents the statistical separation among an order statistic of the classes k for a particular classifier i.

The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$  is of the log-likelihoods of respective classes k for classifiers i.

The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$ , for a particular j, is calculated as:  $L_{ij} = a_1 \ l_{ij1} + a_2 \ l_{ij2} + \ldots + a_n \ l_{ijn}$ , where  $l_{ijk}$ s form order statistic, that is  $l_{ij1} > l_{ij2} > \ldots > l_{ijn}$  and  $a_1 = 1$ ,  $a_2 = -1$  and all other  $a_i s = 0$ .

The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the weight  $w_i$  derived from the metric of relative confidence is calculated as a function of (a) sample confidence  $L_{ij}$ , equal to the L-statistic  $L_{ij}$  and (b) overall confidence  $H_i$ , the cumulative mean of the sample confidence  $L_{ij}$  over a plurality of samples j.

The apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein, the overall confidence H<sub>1</sub> is successively updated with the sample confidence L<sub>1</sub> of each sample j.

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## **ABSTRACT**

A method of classifying samples to one of a number of predetermined classes involves using a number of class models or classifiers to form order statistic for each classifier. A linear combination of the order statistic (L-statistic) is calculated to determine the confidence of that particular classifier, both in general and for that particular sample. Relative weights are then derived from these confidences, and used to calculate a weighted summation across all classifiers for each class of the likelihoods that a sample belongs to that class. The sample is classified in the class which has the associated weighted summation which is greatest in value.

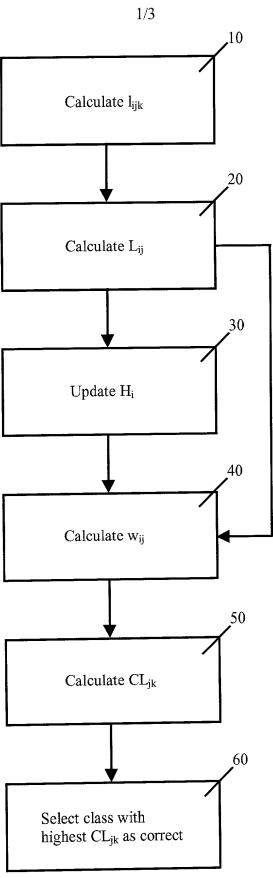


FIG. 1

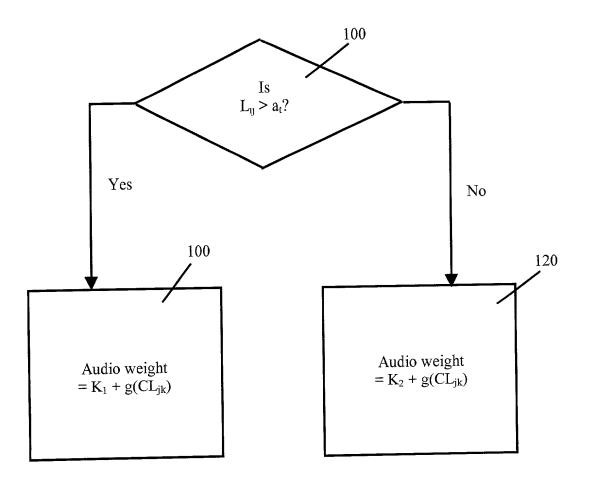
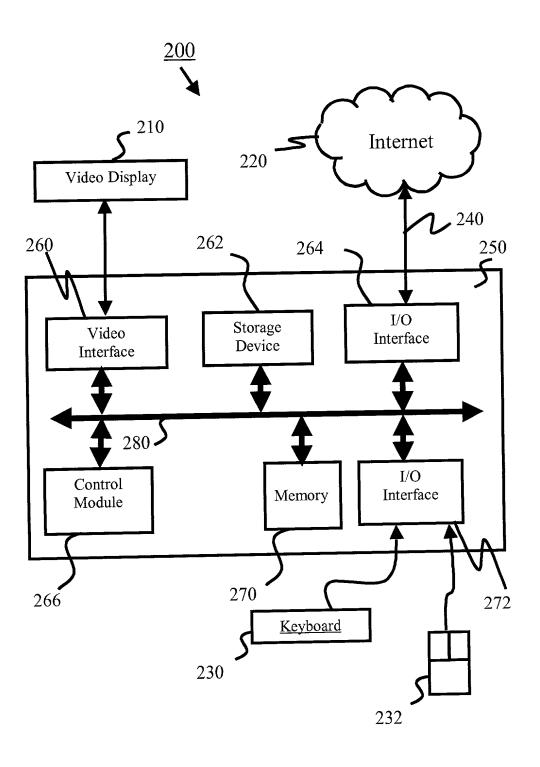


FIG. 2



**FIG. 3** 

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

## DECISION MAKING IN CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS

the specification of which (check of	one)		
X is attached hereto.			
was filed on		as	
Application Serial No.		_	
and was amended on(if a		_	
I hereby state that I have reviewed including the claims, as amended by	d and understand the content of any amendment referred to	ts of the above identified specifabove.	ication,
I acknowledge the duty to disclose accordance with Title 37, Code of I	information which is mater Federal Regulations, Section	ial to the patentability of this on 1.56.	application in
I hereby claim foreign priority ber application(s) for patent or inventapplication for patent or inventor priority is claimed:	boxic cortificato listed he	NOW AND DAVE ALSO IDENLIFIED DETO	w any rereadn
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I hereby claim the benefit under 3 below.	5 U.S.C. §119(e) of any Uni	ted States provisional applicatio	on(s) listed
(Application Number)	(Filing Date)		
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I hereby claim the benefit under T Application(s) listed below and, I not disclosed in the prior United 35, United States Code, Section 11 patentability of this application occurred between the filing date o of this application;	nsofar as the subject matter States application in the 2, I acknowledge the duty	er of each of the claims of the ap- manner provided by the first parag to disclose information material t the of Federal Regulations. Section	graph of Title to the n 1.56 which
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pendin	
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pendin	.g, abandoned)
I hereby declare that all statemen information and belief are believe	ts made herein of my own ked to be true; and further	nowledge are true and that all stathat these statements were made without the statements were made with the statements were made with the statement of the stat	atements made or ith the

knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

\*\*POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to

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